

In previous newsletters I have discussed the importance of “Catching Features and Attack Points” and “Going slowly in places where mistakes are more easily made”. These are concepts we must all keep in our minds. These are all techniques associated with the art of dividing an orienteering course up into rough and fine orienteering.

**Rough orienteering** is the technique used when it is not vital to know your exact position. This is usually in the first part of a leg - from one control to the attack point for the next. You use large and easily recognisable features (catching features) rough compass, running on the needle, and sometimes pace counting - to cross as much of the leg as possible with as little hesitation as possible.

**Fine orienteering** is the technique you use when you must know precisely where you are. This is particularly used in navigating from your attack point to the control feature. You are either using accurate compass and pace counting, or are map reading in detail, or are using some variation of these skills. These parts of an orienteering leg can be related to a 'traffic light' system and are often described as green (rough) and red (fine) parts of a leg. It is also perhaps helpful to think of an amber region. This is a transition from green to red - you slow down to be sure of identifying your attack point.

On a long leg it is often worth using a feature similar to an attack point to put you right along the way, to divide the leg up into two or more shorter legs. Here again an amber region will come into play. In some areas you will find there is a critical part of a leg, it is very important that you go a particular way accurately. (eg. to avoid the possibility of making a parallel error) Here again it pays to know when to slow down and have an amber region.

It has been said that the ability to identify the parts where you can go flat out (rough orienteering) and the parts where you must use fine orienteering is one of the most important skills in orienteering.

Obviously to use fine orienteering techniques when rough ones would suffice will waste considerable time. Likewise not to slow down and use fine technique for a difficult control can make you miss it and lose a lot of time. The only way to get this skill is experience, both your own and what you can glean from others.

The following example illustrates how rough orienteering can be used to get as close to the control as possible without hesitation:



Then, as you near the control you need to know precisely where you are and which feature on the ground is which feature on the map so that you can go straight to the control feature. Your attack point is a more obvious feature close to the control, and from it to the control you must remain precisely located by use of the information available on the map and accurate compass and pace counting.

The Orange and Red Coaching day this year will focus on these techniques.